招き猫神社の テンテコ舞いな日々

THE FORTUNE CAT SHRINE'S HECTIC DAYS

CHAPTER 1

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THE FORTUNE CAT
SHRINE'S HECTIC DAYS

1

招き猫神社のテンテコ舞いな日々

BY JUN YAGIMACHI

八街潤

原作＝有間カオル（メディアワークス文庫）

キャラクター原案＝ゆうこ

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八街潤 Yachimata Jun

原作 ═ 有間カオル（メディアワークス文庫） Original Work ═ Arima Kaoru (Media Works Bunko)

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Bakeneko (化け猫, lit. "changed cat")- cats that became youkai over time. Tales from long ago would say that a long lived cat would turn into a youkai

kuh...

A FEW HOURS EARLIER
LET ME JUST TELL YOU ONE THING—
I'M FINALLY HERE
IT'S TWENTY MINUTES FROM THE NEAREST STATION, WHICH IS A CON, BUT BEGGARS CAN'T BE CHOOSERS.
ANYWAY, IT'S FREE RENT!

STARTING TODAY, THIS IS MY HOME.
Tightly-packed...
THE ENTIRE MAIN SHRINE
HAD THE TORII AND THE MAIN SHRINE ALWAYS BEEN THIS SMALL?

Sign: Maneki Neko Jinja (Fortune Cat Shrine)
165cm = 5'4"
IT'S A BIT OF A LET-DOWN...
I'm just 165cm tall, but it feels like I can reach it
caw
caw
Damnit
BACK TO THE TWENTY-THREE WARDS OF TOKYO
RIGHT NOW, I'D STILL RETURN IF I COULD
I ONLY HAVE TO ENDURE THIS UNTIL I'VE SAVED ENOUGH FUNDS
I CAN'T LET THAT HOLD ME HERE.
NOR THE EUPHORIA WITH THE CHAOS OF PEOPLE AND INFORMATION COMING AND GOING IN THIS PLACE
I CAN'T FEEL A SECOND OF THAT RUSH THAT MAKES YOU FEEL AS IF YOU'RE IN A CONSTANT STRUGGLE.

I WILL DEFINITELY GO BACK TO THAT CITY.
ZZZ
ZZZ
すよ
すよ
LOOK AT THEM, SLEEPING SOUNDLY WITHOUT A CARE IN THE WORLD.
They're so cute, dammit
IT'S A SHRINE THAT LIVES UP TO ITS NAME, THEN
ZZZ
ZZZ

THAT'S THE NAME OF THIS PLACE.
THE FORTUNE CAT SHRINE.
I EVEN GOT PERMISSION TO LIVE IN THE OFFICE AT THE SHRINE GROUNDS
Thanks, Uncle!
HOMELESS AND BROKE
clench
AND WHILE HE DOES, HE ASKED ME TO LOOK AFTER THE PLACE
ORIGINALLY, MY UNCLE IS THE CARETAKER OF THIS SHRINE,
BUT HE'S CURRENTLY RECUPERATING IN THE HOSPITAL
IT DOESN'T HAVE A QUALIFIED PRIEST, THE SHRINE ITSELF ISN'T REGISTERED,
AND THERE ARE BARELY ANY WORSHIPPERS, IT'S FALLEN INTO DISUSE.

I HEARD THAT IT WAS MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER FROM MY MOTHER'S SIDE WHO HAD THIS SHRINE BUILT IN THE FIRST PLACE
It's like building a shrine to the god Inari in your own home
AND THAT SHE DID IT BECAUSE SHE "WAS SAVED BY A CAT"
WHO WOULD NORMALLY BUILD A SHRINE TO SHOW THEIR THANKS?
WHAT KIND OF GRATITUDE IS IT, TO GO THIS FAR?

OH WELL, IT'S NONE OF MY CONCERN.
KA-CHUNK
I HAVEN'T BEEN HERE SINCE I WAS A KID, BUT NOTHING'S CHANGED.
THOUGH IT LOOKS A LITTLE MORE CRAMPED IN HERE THAN I REMEMBER.
THUD
THE PLACE IS OLD, BUT IT'S NOT REALLY THAT WORN-OUT
Good good

slide
WELL, I GREW TALLER, SO THAT'S JUST NATUR—
AAH!
THAT SURPRISED ME. HOW DID IT GET IN HERE?
BUT IT'S REALLY HUGE.
MAYBE 1.5X MORE THAN AVERAGE?
A puzzling sense of defeat
TH— THAT WAS ONE HEAVY HIT. IS IT REALLY A CAT?
WHACK
OW!
Pissed
WOW, WHAT AN UGLY CAT!

STOMP
WELL, THIS PLACE WAS ALREADY UNOCCUPIED DURING UNCLE'S TIME HERE
BUT I WANT TO SAVE AS MUCH MONEY AS I CAN
IS THERE REALLY NOTHING IN THIS HOUSE THAT I CAN USE?
ANYTHING AT ALL? LIKE...
A CLOSET, OR SOMETHING...
THERE'S REALLY NOTHING IN HERE, HUH
Not even dinnerware
FLASH
I REMEMBER NOW! GOOD THING IT'S STILL HERE!

I SHOULDN'T EXPECT TOO MUCH FROM THIS BUT IT'S STILL BETTER THAN NOTHING
OH?
A KIMONO FOR MEN...
...AND ALSO SOME CHILDREN'S KIMONO UNDER IT
There's none for women
I CAN USE THIS AS A ROBE.
ANYWAY, I NOW HAVE THIS
FREE RENT, PLUS A ROBE.
YUP, WHAT A GOOD DEAL!
AND THE SMALLER BOX CONTAINS... CAT-SHAPED CHARMS?

fuaahh—
ぺた
ぺた
OH NO, THIS FEELS SO NICE...
slide

WHEN I WAS A KID,
I DIDN'T LIKE BEING AT OUR HOUSE, SO I USED TO COME HERE QUITE OFTEN.
hic
hic
IT WAS, IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, AN UGLY TABBY CAT LARGER THAN NORMAL.
COME TO THINK OF IT, I ALSO SAW A CAT THEN.
IS THIS ONE ITS CHILD, THEN?

I SHOULD GO OUT AND BUY SOME STUFF WHILE THE SUN'S
STILL UP...

WHAT'S THIS BAGGAGE OVER HERE?
WHAT IS IT?

..WHERE'D YOU KIDS COME FROM?
YOU TOO, WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?
WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?
...THIS IS MY HOME.
YOU KIDS FROM AROUND HERE? YOU SHOULD KNOW IT'S NOT RIGHT TO JUST GO INSIDE SOMEONE'S HOUSE
YOU'RE SAYING THIS IS YOUR HOME? HOW ARROGANT
HOW ARROGANT
WAIT, WHAT? JUST WHO THE HECK ARE THESE KIDS?
OKAY LOOK, KIDS, TH—
THIS
IS OUR HOME!
HAA?!

YOU ROWDY BRATS-
W-WHO ARE YOU?
HEY YOU.
?!

FLAP
CLENCH
WHO TOLD YOU YOU CAN WEAR THIS?
WHAT THE HELL?!
PERVERT! SHADY GUY! YOU'RE TRESPASSING!
I'M GONNA CALL THE COPS!
WHAT?
!
Hii-

sniff
THIS SCENT...
SO YOU'RE THE SNOTTY BRAT FROM THAT TIME, HUH?
JUST WHO THE HELL ARE THESE PEOPLE?
I'M DEFINITELY GONNA HAND THEM OVER TO THE COPS!
SHOT...?
YOU'RE THE KID WHO USED TO GO TO THIS SHRINE, AND CRIED WHILE HUGGING A CAT, RIGHT?
WHY DO YOU KNOW THAT?!
TORA, YOU KNOW THIS HUMAN?
YOU KNOW HIM?

NEGOTIATION BASICS: PRESENT ONE WITH CHOICES THAT WILL ALWAYS LEAD TO A 'YES'.

I PASSED THE KEIO UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAM ON MY FIRST TRY, I WAS A MCKINSEY EMPLOYEE FOR FIVE YEARS, AND I WAS ABLE TO ESTABLISH MY OWN FIRM. THIS IS JUST THE TIP OF MY NEGOTIATING SKILLS.

White
Blue
FOR EXAMPLE, THERE'S A CUSTOMER WHO'S UNSURE WHETHER TO BUY CLOTHES OR NOT
WHICH ONE DO YOU PREFER?
PRESENT THEM WITH A CHOICE THAT WILL SWITCH THEIR MINDSET FROM HESITATION TO A DESIRE TO BUY

ゴゴゴゴ
You want us to leave?!
You're calling the cops?!
AT LEAST LET ME FINISH...
Damnit
SHUT UP! YOU TALK TOO MUCH!
SO, WHICH ONE WILL IT—
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SHOULD LEAVE!

I'M LOSING MY STRENGTH..
WHAT AN INSOLENT HUMAN
SHOULD WE EAT HIM?
HUH-
WHAT-
THAT'S ENOUGH.
WHAT'S HAPPENING!?
MY VISION'S GETTING WEIRD

Huh
THE TWINS ARE GONE—
WHAT WAS THAT JUST NOW?
WHAT
shuffle
shuffle
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
EH?
THERE'S SOMETHING UNDER THE KIMONO?!
SHOOM!

Tsk
THAT HURTS!
BITE
GRRABI
!
CATS? THEY HAVE THE SAME HAIR COLOR AS THE TWINS
SHH
HE HURLED THEM!!!
GET OFF!!
ANNOYED
ANNOYED
ANNOYED
ANNOYED
ANNOYED
Oh.
lean
land
SO?

YOU PLAN ON LIVING HERE STARTING TODAY?
YOU GONNA RETURN THE FAVOR FROM BACK THEN?
FAVOR FROM...?
DIDN'T YOU MAKE MY ELEGANT FUR SOPPING WET WITH YOUR TEARS AND SNOT?
THOSE TWINS CALLED HIM "TORA" A WHILE AGO, DIDN'T THEY?
TABBY CAT
THAT REALLY BIG
WHERE DID THE CAT IN THE PORCH GO?
THAT REMNDS ME,

Tora = tiger
Tabby cats are called **tora-neko** *in Japanese*

THIS CAN'T BE REAL, IT'S JUST SCIENTIFI-CALLY IMPOSSIBLE
A TOUCHING REUNION, DON'T YOU THINK?
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE .
PTO
PU

もた
もた
Escaping from reality
AH
ONE OF THE TWINS IS A GIRL
ぽん
ぽん
ぽん
TORA, YOU'RE GONNA LET HIM STAY HERE?
YOU'RE GONNA LET HIM?
There
There
HEY
WHAT ARE YOU GUYS? A CAT? OR A PERSON?
ぽん
WE USED TO BE CATS
NOW, WE'RE YOUSYOU, OR BAKENEKO, CATS THAT TRANSFORMED INTO YOUKAI.

YOUIBYOU...
WE NO LONGER NEED HUMANS IN HERE!
Kick him out!
Kick him out!
TORA
THAT KID'S AKO'S DESCENDANT, YOU KNOW?
SO WE CAN'T JUST KICK HIM OUT
!!
HE'S CERTAINLY TINY
AKO WAS ALSO TINY, WASN'T SHE?
DON'T CALL ME TINY!!
165 cm
—HM?
WAIT, WHO'S AKO?
IT'S FINE.
SINCE HE'S GOING TO LIVE HERE, HE CAN CLEAN THE SHRINE GROUNDS AND PERFORM THE HOUSE-KEEPING.

...tsk
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU HAVE SOME COMPLAINT.
YOU WANT TO SAY SOME-THING?
OF COURSE I DO. THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS I DON'T UNDERSTAND ABOUT THIS RUTHLESS CAT
...BUT
THERE'S ONE THING I CAN CLEARLY SAY.
THEN LET ME JUST
TELL YOU ONE THING.
I'M GONNA MAKE YOU WORK YOUR FINGERS TO THE BONE.

"THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH."

THIS IS ONE FANTASTIC QUOTE SOMEONE FROM LONG AGO HAS LEFT US

I NEVER THOUGHT THIS WOULD TURN OUT INTO A BAD DEAL, WITH THESE BAKENEKO THROWN IN

to be continued

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